

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

Walking is our oldest and most basic form of transportation – one that is essential not only to our individual health, but also to the overall livability of our cities. Modernization for many cities has meant replacing walking with motorized travel as a primary form of transportation. Few sidewalks were built along roads that did not directly connect to destinations such as schools, work and shopping centers. Because they were designed out of the road network, pedestrians walked less and drove more. Walking is about more than transportation. Walking helps to build strong communities and is the primary way that neighbors get to know one another. Walking is also great exercise and an easy way to improve your mental and physical health.

Nearly everyone, for at least some portion of every day, is a pedestrian. That is why Louisville has developed the Pedestrian Master Plan, which defines the steps needed to make Louisville a more walkable, livable, and healthy city.

Vision and Goals

Vision:

For Louisville to become the safest and most appealing community for pedestrians!

A vision statement creates a visual image in the reader's mind of what Louisville Metro intends to become

Mission:

Create a community wide culture that supports pedestrians through physical improvements, policies and pedestrian programs by increasing the pedestrian system network while simultaneously reducing the rate of pedestrian crashes.

A mission statement links the vision to the goals

Goals:

1. **To improve and expand current pedestrian deficiencies—by preparing a capital improvement process that enables Louisville to increase the pedestrian facility network through retrofitting and expanding current deficient sidewalk and pedestrian crossing locations between 2010 and 2030;**
2. **To simultaneously reduce the rate of pedestrian crashes between 2010 and 2030.**

Goals outline the steps Louisville will take in several areas to achieve the Vision

Benefits of Walking

There are many benefits to be gained from walking. Walking is a viable means of transportation that promotes vibrant communities and helps to improve individual health and fitness. As Louisville grows, walking is a notable quality of life factor that plays an important role in residents' decisions about where to live. Significant environmental, health, and other issues related to walking are discussed below.

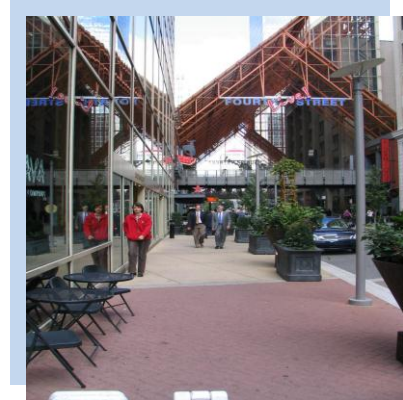
- 🚶 **Accessibility-** Walking is the most broadly accessible form of transportation and recreation, requiring no fare, fuel, or license. For those who cannot use other modes of transportation, the ability to walk safely is essential. For young people, walking affords a sense of independence,

and for seniors, walking is an effective means to stay active both physically and socially. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 35,494 people in Louisville are 65 years or older. In addition, people living with disabilities are more likely to be pedestrians, as some physical limitations make driving difficult. More than 190,000 of Louisville's residents over age five live with a disability. Given the large proportion of people in Louisville that are aging or that have a disability, universal design strategies are critical.

🚶 **Economic-** While some residents choose not to own a motor vehicle, others cannot afford one. In fact, in Louisville approximately 20% of the occupied housing units do not have an available vehicle (Appendix C). In many cases, because the average family must work for more than six weeks to pay a year's car expenses, they choose walking as a more affordable option (U.S. Census, 2000 Housing information).¹

🚶 **Equity-** Accessibility and economics are inherently tied to equitable transportation solutions, and the need to provide options for travel within Louisville cannot be overlooked. Louisville's Center for Health Equity has a commitment to address issues of race and social justice, and the design and implementation of pedestrian projects are no exception.² The Pedestrian Master Plan will provide for the needs of all of Louisville's neighborhoods, with the goal of improving the walking environment for Louisville's diverse populations.

🚶 **Health-** Health is one area in which Louisvillians can increase their quality of life. According to Healthy People 2010, overweight and obesity are considered leading health indicators.³ Overweight is defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 25.0 or greater and obesity is defined as a BMI of 30.0 or greater.³ Kentucky is the seventh most obese state in the country.⁴ Obesity is currently costing Kentucky tax payers \$1.1 billion annually. Moreover, obesity spending in Kentucky makes up 6.2% of adult medical spending and 11.4% of Medicaid costs.⁴ According to the Annual Economic Outlook Conference, in 2007; Kentucky has a current obesity rate of 25%. If the obesity trend continues in Kentucky, by 2010, 31% of Kentucky's population will be obese and by 2015, 37% will be considered obese.⁵ Obesity is a gateway disease which can lead to a number of different illnesses such as: diabetes, heart disease, liver disease, pulmonary problems and reproductive problems in women.⁶ A common way to manage weight is through physical activity.⁷ Physical activity is defined by any body movement which results in energy expenditure.⁸ Examples other than sports include cycling, walking, yard work and climbing stairs. Walking 30-60 minutes a day at a moderate pace can help prevent health risks. Therefore, ensuring that adequate pedestrian facilities are provided in Louisville, KY can help keep residents and visitors healthy.



Fourth Street Live! Pedestrian

¹ <http://hellolouisville.com/Housing.cfm>

² <http://www.louisvilleky.gov/Health/equity/>

³ http://www.healthypeople.gov/Document/HTML/uih/uih_4.htm






⁴ <http://healthyamericans.org/>

⁵ <http://www.kltprc.net/pubs/presentations/2007AnnualEconomicOutlookConference.pdf>

⁶ <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/obesity2005/release.php?StateID=KY>

⁷ PESCATELLO, L. & VANHEEST, J. Physical activity mediates a healthier body weight in the presence of obesity. *British journal of sports medicine*, **34**: 86–93 (2000).

⁸ CASPERSON, C. ET AL. Physical activity, exercise, and physical fitness: definitions and distinctions for health-related research. *Public health reports*, **100**: 126–131 (1985).

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Environment- Louisville’s residents and elected officials have a long history of environmental leadership. For example, *Go Green Louisville!* Is more than just a buzzword. Louisville is taking measurable steps to effect change – not only by making improvements in Louisville’s operations, but also by reaching out to the people of the community. Louisville has been chosen as one of five priority partner cities for the Energy Star program. A team of city representatives has been working closely with the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program to measure energy use in city-owned buildings. Already, Energy Star is showcasing Louisville as a model for other cities trying to implement environmentally-friendly practices.
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Economic Vitality- Cities are increasingly recognizing that the pedestrian environment is a key element of economic vitality. Walkable neighborhoods typically have active streets that promote commercial exchange, while providing safe and efficient ways for residents to travel on foot. Louisville recognizes the role of the pedestrian environment in its prior related plans. Taken together, the prior related plans review indicates that accommodation of pedestrians within Louisville and Jefferson County’s overall transportation network has been repeatedly identified as an area of concern, whether on a regional, countywide, neighborhood, or corridor-specific scale. While improving the walking conditions in a neighborhood can positively impact the economic vitality of the area, it is typically the case that economically vital areas are generally more pleasant and more popular places to walk. The mix of uses and destinations makes walking trips feasible for a variety of purposes. In order to most effectively encourage walking in Louisville, it is important to think about increasing the quantity and quality of accessible destinations as well.
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Quality of Life- Investing in safe and connected pedestrian facilities helps to ensure a high quality of life for residents as well as visitors. With approximately 40% of the land area of U.S. cities dedicated to transportation, streets and sidewalks are a city’s most expansive public space. Sidewalks ideally function as positive places to meet, play, live, work, and shop. People who live in areas where walking is comfortable and convenient are likely to be more familiar with their neighborhoods and to have richer social connections to their community. This is true for the full range of Louisville’s residents, from the youngest children to older adults and everyone in between.
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Congestion- Traffic has a direct effect on walking conditions, pedestrian safety, and quality of life for local residents. Converting motor vehicle trips into walking trips (or walking/transit trips) can reduce the use of the personal automobile and reduce congestion on Louisville’s streets, while simultaneously improving climate and population health. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 11% of Louisville’s residents walked or used public transportation to commute to work.³ According to the National Transportation survey, 26.0% of all automobile trips are less than one mile in length.⁹ Ensuring that adequate pedestrian facilities are provided in Louisville, KY can help residents and visitors make walking part of their daily routine.
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 Source: National Household Travel Survey, United States Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2001. This data also shows that 87% of all pedestrian walking trips are less than 1-mile in length





⁹ Source: National Household Travel Survey, United States Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2001. This data also shows that 87% of all pedestrian walking trips are less than 1-mile in length

Developing the Plan

The Louisville Pedestrian Master Plan is a long-term action plan to make Louisville the world's safest and most appealing community for pedestrians. The plan expands on the 2008 Louisville Community Walkability Plan which has outlined the policies, programs, design criteria, and projects that will further enhance pedestrian safety, comfort, and access in all of Louisville's neighborhoods (see appendix L). Through the Pedestrian Master Plan, Louisville will expand the pedestrian system to over 600 miles with a total cost of 50 million or an average of 2.5 million per year which will make its transportation system more environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.

Steps in the Process:

The Pedestrian Master plan is the result using the previous Louisville Community Walkability Plan as the framework with the addition of updated completed objectives such as the pedestrian facility network. While many pieces of the plan were in progress at any one time, there were five primary steps in the planning process:

-  **Part 1—Setting the Foundation:**
The first step in developing the plan was to set the foundation pieces including establishing the Walkability Task Force, setting objectives, creating and implementing a strategy for public engagement, and selecting a consultant. See below for information as it relates to People in the Planning Process.
-  **Part 2—Existing Conditions and Research Development:**
This portion of plan development focused on data collection and analysis and research of best practices and strategies for creating walkable cities. Data collection and analysis focused on both qualitative and quantitative information in order to understand the existing conditions for pedestrians and the nature and location of the “gaps” in the pedestrian network. This information was collected in May 2008 and is presented in the Louisville Community Walkability Plan (Appendix L) The Louisville Community Walkability Plan was developed in consultation with many different individuals and groups, and defines a set of objectives and actions for use in developing and implementing the Pedestrian Master plan. Please see appendix G for additional regional plans which have influenced the Pedestrian Master Plan.
-  **Part 3—Pedestrian System: Evaluate Solutions:**
The backbone of the Pedestrian Master Plan is a pedestrian system network, also referred to as the sidewalk network. The sidewalk network is based on information gathered in Parts 1 and 2 of the planning process, as well as extensive data analysis. The pedestrian system maps pedestrian demand and improvement opportunities. The plan's prioritization process uses demand, equity, and corridor function to determine a set of improvements and other actions to be achieved by 2030. Please see appendix M for a list of proposed pedestrian system improvements.
-  **Part 4—Develop Implementation and Reporting Plans:**
The fourth step in developing the plan was to prepare for implementation. To do this, Step Up Louisville and partners developed objectives, strategies, actions and the implementation report card, which identify and prioritize a set of near-, mid-, and long-term actions—including physical

improvements, policies and programs—that address gaps and barriers to walking in Louisville. Please refer to appendix B for the latest implementation report card. Additionally, cost estimates and budget needs were estimated, and performance measures were developed.

Part 5 — Public Comment and Plan Adoption

The Louisville Community Walkability Plan was prepared under the guidance of the Healthy Hometown Movement in June 2008. Currently the Pedestrian Master plan is being launched and a public comment period that engages Louisville residents in discussions about the importance of pedestrian issues and the need for physical improvements, policies, program objectives and actions to support a pedestrian friendly environment.

People in the Process:

Public input played a prominent role in developing the Louisville Community Walkability Plan, which provided the framework for the Pedestrian Master Plan. Louisville posted an on-line survey to gather information and current walking habits and factors that will increase walking in Louisville. Citizens, community groups and developers, the business community and appointed officials participated in four community workshops and a pedestrian summit. Detailed information on public input is provided in Appendix A. Since the pedestrian summit, Step Up Louisville has continued to develop the Pedestrian Master plan by working through the Louisville Community Walkability Plans objectives and action items.

Table 1.2- Community Walkability Plan Survey

Which of the following do you participate in regularly? Please check all that apply.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I walk to the bus stop	19.5%	207
I walk all the way to work, school or my volunteer activities	8.0%	85
I walk to run errands or to get to other destinations	35.7%	380
I take walks for fitness/exercise	73.8%	785
I walk around my neighborhood for enjoyment or to walk the dog	71.5%	760
I walk because it is my only transportation option	2.1%	22
I walk to my car	59.1%	628
I rarely or never walk	4.0%	42
Answered question	1063	
Skipped question	7	

Louisville Metro Government staff also contributed to Louisville’s Community Walkability Plan development. Staff provided research and feedback; many staff members also participated in the Pedestrian Summit alongside community members and shared information on current practices. Senior managers worked directly on the plan as the Walkability Leadership Task Force, meeting the afternoon before the Pedestrian Summit to review outcomes from the four community workshops.¹⁰ Walkability Leadership Task Force members represented:

Table 1.1- Public involvement and Stakeholders	
Foundation for a Healthy KY	Louisville Metro Parks
Homebuilders Association of Louisville	Metropolitan Sewer District
Private Developers	Louisville Department of Public Health and Wellness
Louisville Department of Planning & Design	City of Parks
Louisville Department of Public Works & Assets	Transit Authority of the River City (TARC)
Air Pollution Control District	Downtown Development Corporation
Jefferson County Public Schools	Mayor’s Healthy Hometown Movement
Kentucky Department of Transportation	Office of the Elderly and Disabled
Brightside	University of Louisville
Louisville Department of Economic Development	MHHM Built Environment Committee
Louisville Downtown Management District	Louisville Department of Neighborhoods
Kentuckiana Regional Planning & Development Agency (KIPDA)	

Step Up, Louisville:

Louisville’s pedestrian advocacy group is called Step Up, Louisville (with former Active Living committee and Task Force members joining the group). Step Up, Louisville (SUL) will be based upon the 3Ps: Physical Improvement (Capital Investment); Policy and Program. Similar to the Safe Routes to Schools 5 E’s, Physical Improvement in the 3P structure equates to Engineering, Evaluation & Planning; Policy includes Engineering, Evaluation and Enforcement; and Program combines Education and

¹⁰ The Community Walkability plan recommended that the Walkability Task Force continue to maintain the cooperative, working relationship between departments and agencies by meeting regularly and discussing projects and policies that impact the pedestrian environment. Recently the Walkability Task Force merged with the Step Up Louisville committee and the Step Up Louisville committee continues to meet regularly and discuss the plans, objectives and actions. See Action 2.1.1.a.

Encouragement.¹¹ This structure allows SUL the ability to divide strategies and actions into specific P's. Committee members will be divided into small groups of people known as P-Teams, creating working groups for SUL. By creating P Teams, SUL will be able to take a group of people who are interested in the same vision, mission and goal and separate them into different areas that fit their skill set and interest. P-Teams are led by a leader who is a government employee. P-Team leaders' responsibilities include setting up the P Team meetings, setting the meeting agenda and providing the necessary capacity for the P Team to reach its potential. The majority of the P-Teams consist of other metro agency members, concerned citizens and experts in the P Team area.

Healthy Hometown Movement:

The Healthy Hometown Movement unites diverse community partners from business, schools, government, academia, neighborhood groups and non-profit organizations to coordinate activities that will increase physical activity and healthy eating to improve the health of Louisville Metro residents. SUL is just one entity which makes up the Healthy Hometown Movement.

¹¹ Safe Routes to Schools: <http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/local/4191/4219>